

A MAGAZINE OF FAITH AT WORK

THE GREATER MIRACLE

The Place and the Power of the Resurrection

by SAMUEL HUGH MOFFETT

• *In the winter, a year ago, ELIZABETH TARRANT MOFFETT died of cancer in the Princeton Hospital, Princeton, New Jersey. She had expected to return to the Far East to work there again with her husband who was born in Korea and who, today, is back teaching in the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Seoul. SAM sent the first part of the following to his friends after composing it in New York last June.*

IT WAS in October [1954], following a wonderful, happy summer, that we were first shocked by the discovery of the recurrence of cancer—such a sudden, massive recurrence that, after one, quick look, our friend and doctor in New Haven came from the examining room and told me there was no hope. He took it hard. Everyone who knew Bet loved her. He could not even bear to go back and tell her the news.

Of the rest of that day I remember very little, except that Bet was unafraid.

Then came three weeks of X-ray treatments and the return to Princeton and the sudden relapse that sent her to the hospital in an

ambulance. That was the second week in November.

As I look back at the weeks in the hospital, I remember best the times we read the Bible together. Every day, clear to the end, Bet would repeat in her soft Southern way PSALM 103:

"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases. . . ."

Those confident words we took as God's word to us. We began to read together every record we could find in the Gospels of how Jesus healed the sick. I had forgotten how full of miracles of heal-

ing the Gospels are. As we read, our hope returned and we began to pray together definitely and earnestly, knowing that the Lord who loved her could heal her.

Whispered and Left

But He didn't heal her. The second week in January the surgeon operated to relieve some of the pain, and four days later, on January 17, at three in the morning, she left me. Her last word was a whispered "Amen," joining mine as I prayed with her, just before she slipped into the coma from which she did not return.

That night, when it was all over and I stumbled back to [our friends] the Metzgers', I had another unexpected word from her. The day before the operation she had said to Isabel Metzger, "Tell Sam, if the operation does not go as we are hoping, to remember that what God does is perfect." Then she had paused, and added, "And tell him that the last twelve years have been the happiest years of my life."

I will never cease to marvel that there in the midst of her own suffering Bet somehow managed to think ahead unselfishly to what I would need most just then — the memory of the sheer joy that being together had always meant to us, and the reminder that, when we cannot understand, we can still trust.

"What God does is *perfect*."

It would have been easy to lose faith then, but for that reminder. We had been so confident that she would be healed. We had prayed in faith. But the prayer of faith that heals is a gift of God; we do not manufacture it by our earnestness.

There would be something pitiful about our confidence there in the hospital but for the fact that it, too, was a gift of God. It brought us through the long, dark, suffering days, not with a spirit of despair, but with a feeling of expectancy and confidence. Clear up to the end we knew that the Lord could heal her, and that knowledge buoyed us up with hope; and we trusted Him. When He did not heal her, and the darkness came in close and cold, the trust remained.

For His way *is* perfect, and we know there is a greater miracle even than the miracle of healing. *There is the Resurrection.*

• *At the Memorial Service at Princeton Seminary, a few weeks later, JAMES MOFFETT, the writer's brother and the minister of the First Presbyterian Church at Oyster Bay, New York, prayed in part:*

. . . Now we see, though yet we do not fully understand, that, in the spirit only, partners once are partners always; in the spirit only, are we truly one. . . . We thank God . . .

- for her life lived among us;
- for her spirit still with us;
- for our tasks still before us.

• *From the ship which carried SAM back to Korea he added a postscript to his own letter, closing with, "I will need your prayers." And now more recently he sends messages and news—wonderful news of service among young Koreans in church and school and among American GIs in camp:*

These are wonderful days in Korea—overwhelming problems but "sufficient grace," and the all-conquering faith and enthusiasm of the Korean Christians. . . .

I preached this morning up in the hills north of Seoul at 1st Corps (USA) Headquarters Chapel. Afterwards I happened to be talking to Pfc. Rubin from Forest Hills, L.I., who is Assistant to the Jewish Chaplain. "What church do you belong to?" he asked.

"Presbyterian," I said.

"Well," he said, "you'll be interested in this. A while ago the men in my barracks adopted a little Korean orphan, named Chi Sei. We fed him; we clothed him; we even sent him off to school. Then the fellows got to thinking that that wasn't enough. He ought to have a religion. But what religion? We've got four Methodists, two Baptists, one Lutheran, one Congregationalist, three Roman Cath-

olics, and two Jews in the barracks. We decided to hold a meeting of the whole group and settle the thing democratically. After talking it all over for two hours, we took a vote. The result? We voted to raise the little fellow as a Presbyterian!"

"A Presbyterian," I cried, surprised. "But there wasn't a Presbyterian among you."

Figured Carefully

"I know," he said, "but some day we'll have to leave Chi Sei behind. We don't want him to be abandoned. As near as we can figure out, most of the people in Korea seem to be Presbyterian, so he ought to have lots of friends!"

I know that's not the best reason for becoming a Presbyterian. But Pfc. Rubin is right. That new young Presbyterian, Chi Sei, is going to have lots of friends.

I'm thankful that he found big-hearted GIs with sense enough to realize he needed more than food, clothes, and an education. I'm thankful also that there in the little tent that houses the Uijongbu Presbyterian Church he will find friends who will tell him the real reasons for becoming a Christian and, if he wishes, a Presbyterian. The GIs told me, almost with awe, that that tent is crowded out every morning at 4:30 A.M. in the freezing blackness with Korean Christians at their pre-dawn prayers.

Impossible?

BUT IT HAPPENED! **God's Healing during a Church Service**

by RICHARD RETTIG

• *Pastor of St. Peter's Evangelical and Reformed Church, Pittsburgh*

A MEMBER OF OUR CONGREGATION had developed blood poisoning in her hand. She ached in every part and had a temperature, following chills. Her fingers were so stiff and swollen that she could not bend them. A red streak ran up her arm, past her elbow, and her whole arm throbbled with pain. The family would not let her come to the Healing Service on Saturday but put her to bed.

The next day was Rally Day and Mrs. Brim would permit no one to keep her from church, where she felt her place to be. In the Sunday School class before the church service, her class members were horrified to see her swollen hand and arm. They told her, "You ought to see a doctor at once. Don't you know you have blood poisoning?"

Started to Tingle

As soon as Mrs. Brim got into the sanctuary, she felt a tingling sensation in her hand and arm. During the pastoral prayer, which had no special reference to healing

in it, she felt something which she described as "a drawing sensation," drawing from her elbow down through the arm and out of the fingers of her hand. She removed her glove. . . .

After the service was over, Mrs. Brim could bend her fingers. As she shook hands with me with that hand which had been so painful and swollen, she said: "I had a healing in church. Ask your wife; she knows all about it."

Shaking hands with others, she testified to her healing and mentioned that she could not possibly have shaken hands before the service. The swelling had disappeared.

She called Mrs. Rettig the following Tuesday to report that she had done the family washing and there had been no ill effects whatsoever.

Impossible? Of course, so many would say, *but it happened!* I am not interested in any explanation other than that "the power of the Lord was present to heal" (LUKE 5:17). It should be so in every service of worship.

Is prayer your steering-wheel, or your spare tire?—CORRIE TEN BOOM.